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LETTER DATED 12 JULY 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to inform you about the forthcoming steps which the Government of the Republic of Croatia is taking, in accordance with Security Council resolution 847 (1993), concerning the establishment of uninterrupted traffic across the Maslenica straits.

It goes without saying that a bridge across the Maslenica straits is of the utmost strategic importance for the Republic of Croatia. As Croatia has already emphasized in several letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the bridge is the crucial traffic link between the southern part of the Croatian Adriatic coast and the rest of the country. The reopening of the bridge (destroyed during Serbian aggression against the Republic of Croatia in 1991) will benefit not only 1 million people living in southern Croatia, but will also increasingly facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to the neighbouring Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (especially in the light of the Agreement on the passage of humanitarian convoys, signed at Makarska 10 July 1993).

It is the strong opinion of the Croatian Government that the bridge must be reopened without delay, as soon as it is technically possible. The preparatory construction work on the bridge site has been successfully accomplished, including the building of the approach roads to the position of the envisioned pontoon bridge. On Monday, 12 July, Croatian engineers started positioning the pontoon bridge with the goal of opening the bridge to traffic on Sunday, 18 July. Serbian insurgents have tried to interrupt the construction work on the bridge site on several occasions, and on Monday, 12 July, they shelled the area of the Maslenica straits. In spite of their threats, the Republic of Croatia remains determined to continue the work on the pontoon bridge and to open it as scheduled. Any attempt to stop this process will be considered an act of aggression and contrary to the spirit of Security Council resolution 847 (1993).

In addition to reopening the Maslenica bridge, Croatia is determined to open the nearby Zemunik airport to civilian traffic. Zemunik airport should serve as an important link between the Zadar region and the rest of Croatia. It could also be a major base for humanitarian aid delivery. We consider the opening of the Maslenica bridge, as well as of the Zemunik airport, to be essential steps in the normalization of living conditions in the Republic of Croatia designed to facilitate its post-war recovery.

The Republic of Croatia remains committed to the relevant Security Council resolutions and is willing to participate actively in their implementation. In this regard, we must emphasize the importance of all the Security Council documents concerning the territory of the Republic of Croatia, including resolution 802 (1993) that, inter alia, calls for the demobilization of the Serbian forces in the United Nations protected areas.

My Government welcomes the Security Council's commitment to ensure respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia, as inscribed in resolution 847 (1993), as well as stressed in resolutions 815 (1993) and 820 (1993). In this regard, Croatia expects that the Security Council and UNPROFOR will take the steps necessary to ensure that the reopening of the Maslenica bridge will not be interrupted. We shall gratefully welcome such help, which will serve as an indicator of how determined the United Nations is to fulfil the provisions of fundamental Security Council resolutions regarding the Republic of Croatia.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative